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Statement by Representative Nita M. Lowey

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Each year on Memorial Day, Americans take a day to express our gratitude and honor the memory of the men and women who have given their lives in service to our nation. This experience of patriotism and civic consciousness is a time to reflect on the bravery and commitment of those who have answered the call to serve and our responsibilities to uphold the ideals for which they fought.

In Congress, this is a time to recommit ourselves to caring for those who served our country and their families. They have fulfilled their obligations to the American people, and we must fulfill our obligations to them.

That's why I am pleased Congress has provided historic increases of 60 percent since 2007 for health care and other services for our veterans. In Fiscal Year 2010, Congress increased funding by \$15.3 billion over last year's level and \$747 million above the Administration's request. Congress and President Obama also passed a law to fund veterans' medical care one year in advance to ensure timely and uninterrupted funding for veterans' health care system.

To support our active duty personnel, I supported a 3.4 percent military pay increase; a \$3 billion increase in funding for Defense Health Programs; and a \$3.46 billion increase for equipment in the field.

While I am pleased Congress is providing robust funding to care for our military and veterans, much work remains to be done such as ensuring increased resources for PTSD and other mental health issues, resolving the continued backlogs of veterans' claims, and concurrent receipt.

The courage of our military and our veterans is an inspiration to us all, and we thank them all for their service and sacrifice to protect our freedoms. The thoughts and prayers of our entire nation are with the men and women serving today, those who have bravely served, and the families of those whose ultimate sacrifice will never be forgotten.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to our nations' brave soldiers and veterans.